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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 006700

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY - HIGH LEVEL DEFENSE GROUP IDENTIFIES WAYS
TO STRENGTHEN MIL-MIL RELATIONSHIP

REF: ANKARA

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: At the 20th meeting of the bilateral High Level Defense Group (HLDG), the US and Turkey reaffirmed our shared regional vision of a stable, unified and democratic Iraq; a region without Iranian nuclear weapons; security and stability in Lebanon and Afghanistan; and an economically viable and politically-stable Black Sea region. GOT officials raised concerns over the lack of US or Iraqi action against the PKK presence in northern Iraq; growing Iranian influence in Iraq and throughout the region; US-origin equipment in the Republic of Cyprus; NATO restructuring; the prospect of a US Congressional Armenian Genocide resolution; and regional energy security. The Turkish General Staff (TGS) held firm to Turkey's ISAF caveats; requested a US two-star general to fill the Chief of Staff billet at the NATO Rapid Defense Corps (NRDC) headquarters in Istanbul; and urged continued US efforts for Romanian and Bulgarian participation in Operation Black Sea Harmony (OBSH). On Security Cooperation, TGS explained its concerns with past difficulties to gain USG approval to dispose of excess US-origin items and vagueness of the Standard End Use Monitoring (EUM) requirements. The PolMil Working Group established a EUCOM-led, semi-annual Combined Planning Conference (CPC) at the 06 level as a communications bridge between HLDG meetings to resolve issues, develop cooperative engagement opportunities and shape the HLDG agenda. The first meeting of the CPC will occur in April 2007. END SUMMARY.

SHARED VALUES AND CONCERNS

12. (C) The 20th HLDG, held in Ankara from Dec. 11-13, was notable for the increased candor displayed by TGS officials. DCHOD Saygun, gregarious by nature, and with excellent command of colloquial English, set the tone of the 2006 meeting by speaking frankly about the successes and difficulties of the bilateral relationship. GEN Saygun reminded the US that 9/11 did not represent the beginning of the war on terrorism, which Turkey has been fighting for years and to which Turkey continues to contribute through its present and future commanding roles in ISAF, SEEBRIG and NRF-8 and its leadership of the Kosovo sector in May 2007. He thanked the US for its support of Turkey's EU accession

process and said Turkey is "trying to survive" in its neighborhood as a democratic, secular country. He added that "we intend to stay that way" and warned that any attempt to create moderate Islam in Turkey would only encourage radicals. ASD Rodman emphasized the pivotal role of Turkey in the region and said the US/TU common perception of strategic issues underpins the bilateral relationship.

IRAQ/PKK - THE ACHILLES HEEL

13. (C) In contrast to 2005, when TGS specifically asked that we leave discussion of Iraq/PKK out of the HLDG and agreed only to a small-group session on the PKK, this year TGS included both issues on the agenda. GEN Saygun characterized Iraq as a regional issue that requires our combined efforts to solve. Turkey's briefing on Iraq called the situation worse than a civil war, with Kurds and Shi'ia groups working against an integrated federal state. According to TGS, the proposed federal structure will cause a division of the country and "catastrophe throughout the region." TGS officials urged US support for continued inter-ethnic reconciliation efforts to cement a strong central government and ensure the territorial integrity and national unity of the country and said US efforts to train peshmerga as a distinct force could increase the problems.

14. (C) KIRKUK: Kirkuk will be the flash point of the struggle and regional conflict, according to TGS. The central government has no authority over the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which has its own flag, coins, post office and passport and is attempting to control the national border. Kirkuk is a victim of its oil wealth, which must be fairly shared by all Iraqis, without discrimination. Any attempts to change the demographics by disenfranchising the

Turkmen in favor of Kurds will cause further problems. TGS underscored that the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline plays a crucial energy role and must be protected.

15. (C) CUTTING OFF THE HEAD: DCHOD Saygun compared the PKK to a poisonous snake with its tail in Turkey and its head in Iraq. If you cut the tail, it grows back. You have to cut the head. The locations of PKK leaders in Iraq are well known to both Iraqi authorities and journalists, he said. To demonstrate it is serious about eliminating the PKK, the Iraqi government should: 1) officially list the PKK and its affiliates as a terrorist organization; 2) close all PKK camps in the border area 3) arrest its leaders and turn them over to Turkey; 4) cut off the logistics routes; close affiliate offices; 5) effectively control its border; and 6) sign the bilateral agreement on combating terrorism.

16. (C) TU ACTION REMAINS A VIABLE OPTION: Fighting the PKK, Saygun stated, is an important aspect of GWOT and is critical to the US/TU bilateral relationship. The US should take steps against the PKK to reverse the negative Turkish public opinion. US prohibition of Turkish action is a problem. "Even Saddam let us conduct operations" asserted Saygun, who added that Turkey has not ruled out any option. The final slide of the TGS presentation stated that Turkish action against the PKK remains a viable option. ASD Rodman emphasized that the USG is fully committed to help Turkey end the PKK terrorist threat. EUCOM J-5 Maj Gen Remkes underscored that everyone in the room shared responsibility for turning around Turkish public opinion on this issue.

17. (C) FIGHT, DON'T ENGAGE THE PKK: Maj Gen Remkes noted the December 11 meeting of retired Generals Baser and Ralston in Stuttgart, during which they discussed efforts to close Makhmour refugee camp and to develop an actionable work plan for a trilateral meeting in the near term. Saygun responded that the idea of the trilateral process was designed to find ways to fight the PKK. Iraqi President Talabani's discussion with the PKK, which led to the Oct. 1 unilateral cease-fire, was not what Turkey wanted. We will not, he stated, sit at the table with Kurds at the Trilateral meeting. They represent no one but the PKK and will relay every point to the terrorist organization. Saygun closed the discussion by

showing video clips dated October 9 and November 7, 2005, purportedly showing PKK leaders purchasing arms at a market 3-4 kilometers inside the Iraqi border.

NUCLEAR IRAN - CHANGING THE REGIONAL POWER BALANCE

¶18. (C) Turkey's goal is a nuclear-free Middle East, said GEN Saygun, but warned that the use of force to achieve that goal would increase radicalism. He urged resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue via peaceful, diplomatic means. TGS welcomed the briefing on Iran's nuclear and regional ambitions by DIA Senior Analyst for Middle East Issues Bruce Hardcastle, agreeing that increasing Iranian influence in Iraq would seriously undermine the stability of that country and have a broader impact on the region. The MFA and TGS officials disagreed, however, that Iran and the northern Iraqi Kurds would align against the Sunnis under a federal Iraq. They did not comment on the impact of a nuclear Iran on Turkey. Following the briefing, a TGS official from J-2 Middle East Affairs opined that Iran will have a nuclear weapon earlier than the 2010-2015 time frame predicted by DIA.

¶19. (C) ASD Rodman recounted his recent visit to Bahrain as part of the US Gulf Security Dialogue -- a series of bilateral discussions covering missile defense, counter-terrorism, counter-proliferation and Iraq which the US would like to expand into a multilateral dialogue. He noted the concern of Gulf Arab States that Iran's nuclear program is a bid for regional hegemony. Arabs reject Iran's pretensions to Middle East leadership and want to know that the US is committed to their security. Hezbollah, Syria and Iran are trying to bring down the Lebanese government. Iran is also supporting other regional forces of radicalism, including Hamas.

TRAINING KEY TO SUCCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

¶10. (C) The Afghan Security Forces are not strong enough to secure the country, stated GEN Saygun. However, ISAF's mandate is not to fight terrorism for them. That is the mandate of the coalition forces under Operation Enduring Freedom. ISAF operations should be conducted in line with the provisions agreed by NATO, which do not include counter-terrorism efforts. Turkey is determined to do whatever it can to put together a reliable Afghan force. The Turkish Armed Forces are working to increase the capacity of the Afghan military and hope to establish a 105/155mm Howitzer battalion there, providing both the necessary equipment (given USG end-use transfer approval) and training. On ISAF caveats, ASD Rodman countered that it is critical for NATO to have a robust mandate to do what is necessary to protect Afghan security. He urged NATO members to stand up to the requirement and demonstrate to the Taliban that NATO is not weak.

¶11. (SBU) WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS: TGS officials emphasized the importance of political, economic and social improvements to the maintenance of security and enumerated the extensive list of Turkish support for Afghanistan, including: Led ISAF II (6/02-2/03) with 1300 personnel and ISAF VII (2/05-8/05) with 1450 personnel; currently sharing ISAF Regional Command Capital with France and Italy, contributing one battalion and support units; pledged \$100M in health, education and agriculture assistance; built 2 hospitals, 2 clinics, 2 mobile clinics and 12 schools, which were also equipped; work underway on six more clinics and 15 additional schools; opened a PRT in Wardak on November 9, 2006 to further development projects already begun there: 3 primary schools, 1 health clinic, 1 vocational school of agriculture, water tank and transmission lines, cold storage facility, recreational sports center and a playground. Counter-narcotics training is also underway.

NATO TRANSFORMATION -- CONSIDER MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

¶12. (SBU) TGS expressed concerns about the NATO Peacetime Establishment Review that is evaluating the effectiveness and deployability of the NATO command structure. Turkey is

opposed to any major changes in the command structure, in particular the Air Command and Control Structures (ACCS), which it considers a critical component of NATO operational support. TGS stated its opposition to a reduction in the number of ACCS. and requested US support at NATO for consideration of member state contributions to the ACCS in evaluating the viability of individual air commands. It also requested US support to ensure that the ACC command positions are not the inherent right of the host country. During the PMWG, OSD confirmed US agreement that ACC commands should not be the inherent right of the host nation.

¶13. (SBU) During the PMWG, TGS urged against the declaration of the NATO Readiness Force (NRF) as part of the NATO Strategic Reserve. OSD countered that inclusion of the NRF in the Strategic Reserve would help to relieve the force generation problems faced by NATO and would give the NRF a regular mission that is meaningful for the alliance. Since the Strategic Reserve force is rarely used (note: last used in 2004 when two battalions were sent to Kosovo), there should not be a significant additional burden on the NRF forces.

¶14. (SBU) TGS reiterated during the PMWG a previous request (which was denied) for the US to assign a two-star general as Chief of Staff to the NRDC in Istanbul, and asked that the tour be extended to 2-3 years, vice the standard single year tour. In closing the HLDG, GEN Saygun made a plea for US fulfillment of this request, noting his personal involvement in the stand-up of the Istanbul NRDC and expressing frustration at the subsequent establishment of Composite Headquarters to give small members an opportunity to host a command, which provided excess capacity. Further discussion on this issue was deferred to the CPC.

¶15. (SBU) OSD noted the US offer to command the NATO Special Operations force and encouraged Turkey to increase its Special Ops force contribution.

AGREEMENT ON THE BLACK SEA

¶16. (SBU) TGS welcomed the USG Black Sea initiative, particularly the emphasis on the broader region, not just the body of water, and the concept of "regional ownership and regional leadership." GEN Saygun welcomed USG interest in strengthening regional institutions including BSEC and OBSH, in particular the continued USG commitment to encourage Romania, Bulgaria and other littorals to participate in OBSH. He caveated this support by saying that other littorals "must respect Turkish leadership and experience" until they achieve the same capability level. He urged the US to reflect in its planning the "hard won" NATO relationships with Russia, Ukraine and new PFP members in the region.

LEBANON - IMPLEMENTING UNSCR 1701

¶17. TGS noted Turkey's support for UNSCR 1701 and urged the full cooperation of Israel, Syria and Lebanon. TGS deployed in October naval troops and one frigate off the Lebanese coast to patrol the eastern Mediterranean between Sidon and Beirut and ground troops to Ech-Chatie in southern Lebanon as part of the expanded UNIFIL force. It has opened two seaports, two airports and one naval base to support UNIFIL troop transit and UNIFIL equipment maintenance. TGS urged the full cooperation of Israel, Syria and Lebanon to implement UNSCR 1701 and, noting the link between Lebanon and the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), urged greater efforts on the MEPP.

OTHER REGIONAL CONCERNS

¶18. (C) Armenia: TGS expressed grave concern over the increased Armenian diaspora efforts in the US to increase support for an Armenian Genocide Resolution.

Cyprus: The per capita defense expenditures of the Greek Cypriots tops the "global scale" according to TGS, which expressed concerns that the ROC was upgrading its Russian

helicopters with thermal cameras to do night operations; purchasing additional T-80 tanks and upgrading its current fleet with thermal cameras. It stated that the withdrawal of US-origin equipment deployed by Greece to the ROC has never been completed and asked the US to take immediate steps to ensure the withdrawal of the remaining equipment. TGS expressed concern about the possible signature of a military cooperation agreement between France and the ROC.

Greece: TGS said that "good neighborly relations" would help to solve Turkey's issues with Greece and underscored that the November visit of CHOD Buyukanit to Athens was a positive step in this process.

Syria: TGS warned that regime change in Syria would result in the majority Sunnis gaining overwhelming power which could lead to the radicalization of groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. It urged US efforts to encourage moderate players within the government and to press for a balanced approach by the Syrian government.

Defense Industry Cooperation: GEN Saygun said there is a "misconception" in the US that Turkey is excluding US companies from commercial tenders for defense equipment. That said, there are certain conditions which must be met and Turkey cannot make an exception for any single country. Additionally, the sales route should be two-way, not one-way from the US to Turkey.

Strategic Vision Document: MFA DG for Americas Affairs Ambassador Alpar emphasized Turkey's interest in initiating discussions as agreed under the Strategic Vision document.

SECURING REGIONAL ENERGY SOURCES

¶19. (C) TGS predicted a geopolitical polarization based on energy provider and consumer countries over the next 20-25 years, when energy consumption is expected to increase 70% globally. With Russia controlling 6% of oil reserves and 30% of natural gas concerns it is able to use energy for political means, as witnessed in winter 2005, when it cut off

supplies to Ukraine. Georgia may experience the same problem in 2007. Turkey's goal is to diversify its energy sources to the greatest extent, including through the addition of nuclear energy. It currently procures natural gas from Russia and Iran and expects to add gas from the Shah-Deniz pipeline in Azerbaijan next year. The government is also increasing its storage capacity to avoid a disruption in supply. OSH and Operation Mediterranean Shield help to protect the north/south and east/west pipelines crossing Turkey into the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Over 3M barrels of oil transit the Bosphorus Straits each year. This volume is not sustainable and Turkey has warned oil companies of the need to diversify their routes. The MFA requested US assistance to notify US oil companies of the need to diversify their transit routes and reduce their dependency on the Bosphorus Straits.

¶20. (C) According to MFA DG Mithat Rende, Russia will trade up to 800 cubic meters of gas in the coming years. Given Russia's control of significant energy sources, the international community must make Russia a more reliable partner. Rende said the only way to do this is to find alternatives to Russia. He urged the US to work together with Turkey and the EU towards this end but expressed dismay that the EU does not share a common energy policy. OSD Director of Southern European Policy agreed on the importance of supply diversification and security. He urged TGS to think through its potential support for civilian authorities and said that NATO, as a security structure, should be able to contribute ideas to the development of a member-wide security mechanism. Rende urged the US to discuss with the Iraqi government ways to better protect the Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline, which was attacked 16 times in 2006. Turkey has established a working group with Iraq to discuss energy issues.

EXPANDING MIL-MIL COOPERATION

¶21. (SBU) GEN Saygun welcomed the US initiative to establish a Combined Planning Conference as a mechanism to increase communication and cooperation between TGS and US forces at the Colonel (06) level throughout the year. The group would take action on ideas for training, exercises and other forms of cooperation developed during high-level visits and other meetings; provide a forum to solve policy issues (but not security cooperation issues) that do not merit consideration at the HLDG; and would help to establish the agenda for the annual HLDG. The group would meet twice per year, once in the spring and once in the lead up to the HLDG. During the PMWG, it was agreed that EUCOM will develop a Terms of Reference for the group and submit it to TGS for consideration in January 2007. Subsequently the two sides will develop an agenda and establish a date for the first of two annual meetings, to be held in April 2007. The second meeting would be held in October 2007.

PMWG ACTION ITEMS

¶22. (SBU) The following action items resulted from the PMWG discussions on mil-mil cooperation, NATO issues, energy security, Afghanistan, Lebanon and UNIFIL. The complete list will be submitted to Ilan Goodman at State EUR/SE.

Mil-Mil Cooperation:

- Combined Planning Conference: It was agreed to enhance action officer cooperation between HLDG meetings through the establishment of a Combined Planning Conference (CPC) at the Colonel (06) level, with Land, Air, Naval and Counter-Terrorism sub-working groups co-chaired at the Major-Lieutenant Colonel (04-05) level. The group will meet twice annually, in April and October, beginning in April 2007. EUCOM will host the initial meeting in Stuttgart and will draft Terms of Reference for the group for presentation to TGS in January 2007. TGS will respond by February 2007 and an agenda will then be developed.
- US/TU Officer Exchange Program: TGS agreed on the EUCOM proposal for the initial exchange. EUCOM will host the 2007 program. Seven Turkish officers (04-06 rank) will participate in a March 11-18 exchange. TGS will host in 2008.

NATO:

- US Two Star to NRDC-TU: The CPC will examine the TGS proposal for US participation in the NRDC-TU headquarters in Istanbul. Additionally, the US will consider the TU request to bid on the COS position at NRDC-TU and to expand the tour of duty of US personnel in NRDC-TU HQ and affiliated US units.
- NATO Command Structure: The two sides reached a common understanding on the requirement for two ACCs in the NATO Command Structure and agreed that the CAOC command position should not be reserved for host nation personnel.

Energy Cooperation:

- The two sides agreed to continue cooperation in the field of energy security and to examine opportunities for joint training and exercises in support of energy security.

SCWG ACTION ITEMS

¶23. (SBU) Of the 14 items discussed at the SCWG, 2 were pending items from 2005. The most important among them was the TGS request for USG approval to dispose of a large amount of antiquated US-origin equipment. A review of this request by the Defense Logistics Agency determined that local disposal would be most cost effective, provided that demilitarization requirements were complied with. The US side promised a swift update on the status of the authorization to proceed, which is currently with STATE PM/RSAT. Also pending was a TUAFF request for the upgrade of

flight control and radar systems for four Special Forces UH-60 helicopters. The US Army Security Assistance Command is in the process of reviewing new information provided by the Turkish Air Force (TUAF) in November 2006.

124. (SBU) Other Major Issues raised by Turkey:

-- F-16 LOA Status: TUAF briefed that the Undersecretariat for Defense Industries (SSM) and Lockheed Martin are currently discussing electronic warfare components, and that GOT decisions about preferences for production location and the mix of C and D models has not been finalized. The ongoing USG assumption was that the aircraft assembly would take place at Lockheed facilities in the US and cautioned that the offer expiration date is January 31, 2007. Changes after this date will likely result in additional costs and delivery delays.

-- Ship Transfer Request: The Turkish Navy expressed a strong interest in acquiring two additional PERRY Class Frigates, along with OSPREY Class Coastal Mine Hunters and one reactivated POWHATON Class Ocean Tug. The GOT requested that the US accelerate the decision and transfer process for the PERRY Class Frigates.

-- Complaint about enhanced end use monitoring: TGS briefed its issues with End Use Monitoring with respect to the ambiguity of the Standard EUM Note on LOAs. The US stressed the legal requirements of the program and underscored that they are not waivable. The US emphasized the intent of the Standard EUM Note is not to conduct inspections of equipment as a matter of routine. The two sides agreed in principle to work together to meet monitoring requirements with a focus on minimal disruption and interference to Turkish facilities and operations in implementing the Enhanced End Use Monitoring requirements.

-- Offer to transfer 155mm Howitzer Battalion to Afghanistan: The TGS offer to contribute one Artillery Battalion and associated training and support to Afghanistan is supported by the US. There was agreement that TGS will issue a Third Party Transfer request to the US following confirmation of the Afghan government's acceptance of Turkey's offer and the US will act expeditiously to process it upon receipt.

125. (U) The complete list of action items from this working group will be forwarded to Kristin Dowley at STATE PM/RSAT.

126. (U) Participants: The HLDG was led by TGS Deputy Chief of the General Staff (DCHOD) GEN Ergin Saygun and by US Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs Peter Rodman. On the Turkish side, TGS J-2 LTG Aslan Guner, J-3 LTG Bekir Kalyoncu, J-4 LTG Rasim Aslan, J-5 LTG Hilmi Akin Zorlu, J-5 Strategy Division Chief MG Serdar Savas, J-5 Defense Planning and Resource Management Chief BG Alpaslan Erdogan, MFA Director General (DG) for Americas Affairs Ambassador Alpar, MFA DG for Energy Mithat Rende and MFA DDG for Americas Affairs Murat Esenli also participated. In addition to ASD Rodman, the US was represented by Defense and Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) Director Lt Gen Jeffrey Kohler, EUCOM J-5 Commander Maj Gen Robertus (Dutch) Remkes, Ambassador Wilson, DIA Senior Analyst for the Middle East Bruce Hardwater, ODC Chief Maj Gen Sutton, Embassy PolMilCoun Siebentritt and DSCA Regional Deputy for Europe/Africa Nancy Morgan. Savas chaired the Political-Military Working Group (PMWG) for TGS together with MajGen Remkes. Erdogan chaired the Security Cooperation Working Group (SCWG) together with DSCA Regional Deputy for Europe/Africa Nancy Morgan.

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